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A PLEDGE TO SERVE OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A Letter from Superintendent Joel D. Boyd

August 10, 2012



Dear Parents, Guardians, Caregivers and Community Partners:

Thank you for the warm welcome and hospitality that you provided upon my arrival to Santa Fe. Over the last several days, I have met countless people who have shared great ideas and a desire to support our schools—people who know that our public schools are good and can be great.

During a meeting with administrators last week, I emphasized our mission of making Santa Fe Public Schools the best district in the state. I shared many wonderful things that are already happening in our schools, from growth on standardized assessments to partnerships with local and national organizations. I also shared the dire need for accelerated improvement. Currently, just 56.5% of our students are graduating from high school on time. At the current rate, it will take more than 100 years for us to reach a point where all of our children are reading on grade level and achieving mathematical proficiency. While I remain impressed by the hard work that our staff across the district has done, we have to push ourselves to do even more. **We have to change the status quo.**

Earlier this week, I outlined five core beliefs which I have carried with me in every position that I have held, from teacher to principal to superintendent:

- **A high quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child in our schools.**
- **Teaching and learning are at the core of our work.** Everything we do must be in support of what happens in the classroom.
- **Parents are our partners.** They are our students' first and best teachers.
- **There is no silver bullet for improving our schools.** Putting every child on a path to college requires hard and steady work, each and every day.
- **Every adult in the system is responsible for the academic success of our children.**

Guided by these beliefs and by working together – parents, teachers, administrators, support staff and the broader community - we will raise the bar for ALL of our students and close the academic divides which have persisted for far too long among our diverse populations.



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To accomplish our goals, we must commit – as a community – to raising our expectations for ALL of our children. In examining our student achievement data, you will notice that our student proficiency rates correlate directly with family income levels. Our educational system is perpetuating a cycle of poverty; a cycle that must be broken immediately.

I know first-hand that a family's economic situation has absolutely no bearing on a child's intellect. My mother often relied on public assistance to make ends meet. However, she recognized that her financial misfortune did not have to be a life sentence of poverty for her children. She pushed my brothers, sister and me to achieve in the classroom, believing that education was a route to a better future for all of us. My mother knew that even though she did not have a lot of money, her children could accomplish anything that they set out to do. I PLEDGE to hold those same expectations for ALL of Santa Fe's students. **ALL of our children must graduate from high school on a path to college and career success.**

Of course, high expectations alone will not be enough. Our younger students will be graduating into a world far different than the one we inhabit today; a world which will include technology that has not yet been imagined. To provide our children with a competitive edge, we must teach them how to think critically and provide them with a broad set of knowledge which goes beyond that which can be measured by a test. As Superintendent, I PLEDGE to offer ALL of our children a well-rounded education which prepares them for college and the global marketplace; a schooling experience which values Santa Fe's rich history and traditions while providing them with the 21st century skills they will need.

We have a long road ahead of us for sure, but it can be done – if we work together. This coming school year, we will be focusing on four priority areas: **Academic Achievement, School Climate & Behavioral Supports, Community Engagement and Performance Management.** I am looking forward to working with all of you to chart a course of action in each of these areas as we build a path to college for ALL of our students. The Board of Education led a valuable strategic planning process prior to my arrival – we are now charged with finding an efficient way to implement it. Accelerating achievement will require the collective talents of everyone with an interest in our schools; students, parents, teachers, administrators and the broader community.

I could not be more proud to be your Superintendent. Thank you again for your ongoing partnership and support. Santa Fe is a world-class city which deserves a world-class school system. I am committed to making that desire a reality.

Inspired by the hopes and dreams of our children,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Boyd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joel D. Boyd
Superintendent of Schools

